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Interactive playful strategies and their impact with speaking development among eighth-grade students at Tufiño High School

Estrategias lúdicas interactivas y su impacto en el desarrollo de la expresión oral en estudiantes de octavo grado de la Unidad Educativa Tufiño

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ABSTRACT

Promoting oral expression in English remains a challenge in rural settings, where technological resources, opportunities for interaction, and communicative practice are scarce. Since the purpose of this study was to examine the connection between interactive game-based strategies and progress in oral expression among eighth-grade students at the Tufiño school, located in the Ecuadorian province of Carchi, a non-experimental, cross-sectional diagnostic design was employed, characterized by a quantitative approach and the incorporation of qualitative measures. Thirty-seven students and two English teachers participated through a census. Data were collected via a 16-item student questionnaire, an oral expression test, observation checklists, and teacher interviews; three experts reviewed the instruments, and the results revealed that although group work was common (91.89%), the frequent use of tongue twisters (13.51%), riddles (18.92%), role-playing games (8.11%), and spelling competitions (21.62%) was limited. 70.27% of the students reported that they take frequent pauses when speaking; only 27.03% said they communicate fluently, and 35.14% stated that they speak accurately because, according to the results of the diagnostic test, 54.05% were at the A1 in development level, 29.73% at Pre-A1, and 16.22% at A1 (consolidated). Furthermore, 81.08% opted for role-playing games or group competitions indicating that the institution has a significant collaborative foundation but needs to incorporate recreational activities focused on oral production in a more systematic, contextual, and assessable manner.

Keywords: interactive playful strategies, speaking skills, English language teaching, rural education, mixed methods

RESUMEN

Fomentar la expresión oral en inglés sigue siendo un desafío en entornos rurales, donde los recursos tecnológicos, las oportunidades de interacción y la práctica comunicativa son escasos ya que el propósito de esta investigación fue examinar la conexión entre las estrategias lúdicas interactivas y el progreso de la expresión oral en los alumnos de octavo grado del plantel educativo Tufiño que se encuentra en la provincia del Carchi, Ecuador, entonces se empleó un diseño diagnóstico no experimental y transversal, que se caracteriza por su enfoque cuantitativo y la incorporación de pruebas cualitativas. 37 alumnos y dos profesores de inglés tomaron parte a través de un censo. La información fue adquirida a través de un cuestionario para estudiantes compuesto por 16 ítems, un examen de expresión oral, listas de observación y una consulta con maestros; tres expertos revisaron los instrumentos mientras que los resultados revelaron que aunque el trabajo en grupo era común (91,89 %) la utilización frecuente de trabalenguas (13,51 %), adivinanzas (18,92 %), juegos de rol (8,11 %) y competencias de deletreo (21,62 %) era escasa. El 70,27 % de los alumnos informó que hace pausas frecuentes al hablar; solamente el 27,03 % dijo que se comunica con fluidez y el 35,14 % expresó que habla con precisión porque de acuerdo con los resultados de la prueba diagnóstica el 54,05 % se encontraba en A1 en desarrollo, el 29,73 % en Pre-A1 y el 16,22 % en A1 consolidado pues además, el 81,08% optó por juegos de rol o competencias en grupo y se determina que la institución cuenta con una base colaborativa significativa, pero necesita incluir de manera más sistemática, contextual y evaluable actividades lúdicas enfocadas en la producción oral.

Palabras clave: estrategias lúdicas, expresión oral, enseñanza del inglés, educación rural, métodos mixtos

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most visible outcomes of foreign-language learning because it requires learners to retrieve vocabulary, organize ideas, select grammatical structures, manage pronunciation, and respond to an interlocutor almost simultaneously. In contrast to merely reproducing isolated forms, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages places a strong emphasis on intentional communication and the learner's capacity to act through language (Council of Europe, 2020). The national English curriculum in Ecuador also encourages the integrated development of language skills and communicative ability (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016). However, the inclusion of communicative objectives in formal documents does not ensure ongoing classroom speaking opportunities.

Oral development requires a balanced combination of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, deliberate attention to language, and fluency practice (Newton & Nation, 2020). In early proficiency levels, students need predictable support, repeated opportunities, and tasks that make communication achievable without reducing it to mechanical repetition (Pérez et al., 2025). Communicative Language Teaching therefore places interaction, negotiation of meaning, and functional language use at the center of classroom practice (Richards, 2006). When students mainly copy rules, translate sentences, or answer short display questions, they may acquire declarative knowledge but still hesitate when they need to produce an extended message.

The challenge is especially relevant in rural schools. Limited connectivity, scarce specialized spaces, restricted access to devices, and heterogeneous prior learning can narrow the range of activities that teachers are able to implement. Recent evidence from Ecuadorian teachers shows that limited instructional time, an emphasis on grammar and writing, low motivation, and uneven resources continue to affect speaking instruction (Guerrero Rodríguez & Moreira Baquerizo, 2025). It's not only a technical issue. Carefully planned pair work, role play, information-gap tasks, storytelling, competitions, and low-cost oral games can increase classroom engagement even in the absence of technology (Yanez et al., 2026).

Because interactive playful tactics provide learners with a clear goal, rules, reasonable hurdles, and instantaneous social feedback, they provide a practical way to increase engagement (Román & Rodríguez, 2025). Although results depend on pedagogical design rather than just points or competition, gamification research has typically showed positive benefits on learning, motivation, and behavior (Bai et al., 2020; Sailer & Homner, 2020) and the quantity and caliber of meaningful language that a game produces is more valuable in language classes than the game's name. While the teacher offers scaffolding and feedback, a well-designed activity should require students to share knowledge, make decisions, reformulate ideas, and listen to peers.

Role play is particularly relevant because it places language within recognizable situations and enables students to rehearse social meanings before speaking more spontaneously.

Experimental evidence has shown that role-play techniques can increase speaking performance when learners receive preparation, clear roles, and opportunities to repeat the task (Krebt, 2017). Ecuadorian research has also highlighted the contribution of playful activities to vocabulary, participation, and oral communication in basic education (Paredes Reascos et al., 2024). However, activities can lose their communicative value when they are used occasionally, without progression, or only as entertainment at the end of a lesson.

At Tufiño High School, the thesis diagnosis identified a contrast between the expected communicative orientation of English education and the limited regular use of specific playful strategies. Eighth-grade students were exposed to group work, but they had fewer opportunities to participate in role plays, riddles, tongue twisters, and spelling contests. Additionally, their speech performance displayed hesitancy, limited vocabulary, low fluency, and pronunciation issues. Therefore, the local context required more than just a broad advice to "use games" and it required proof of the tactics that were already in place the speaking dimensions that were most vulnerable and the activities that instructors and students thought were practical.

Thus, the study sought to answer the following question and what is the relationship between interactive playful tactics and the growth of English-speaking abilities among Tufiño High School eighth-grade students? Using data from student surveys a diagnostic test, classroom observations and instructor perspectives, the goal was to examine the relationship between students' speaking growth and the reported use and perceived use of playful tactics. The study did not attempt to prove causal impact because the design was cross-sectional and non-experimental. Rather it sought to create a contextualized diagnostic baseline for future pedagogical guides and interventions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

The study used a diagnostic, non-experimental, and cross-sectional design with a predominantly quantitative orientation and complementary qualitative interpretation. The mixed-method logic was appropriate because the research combined numerical patterns from student responses and speaking scores with contextual information from structured classroom observation and teacher perspectives. The purpose of integration was not to create two independent studies, but to explain how reported classroom practices, observable conditions, and oral performance converged within one rural school setting (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The design was exploratory and descriptive. It characterized the frequency and perceived usefulness of interactive playful strategies, documented students' speaking profiles, and examined the association reported in the thesis between the two constructs. No treatment was randomly assigned, no control group was established, and all information was collected during the 2025-2026 academic year.

Consequently, the term relationship is used throughout this article instead of impact whenever the evidence does not support causal inference.

Context and participants

The study was carried out at Tufiño High School, a rural school in Tulcán Canton, Ecuador's Carchi Province. All 37 eighth-graders—18 in parallel A and 19 in parallel B made up the target population and the pupils' ages ranged from 12 to 13 although a census was employed instead of a probabilistic sampling because the group was small and easily accessible. Additionally two English teachers took part to share information regarding pedagogical priorities and current methods because the student cohort ($n = 37$) served as the main quantitative analytic unit; teacher replies ($n = 2$) were evaluated descriptively and were not extrapolated outside of the institution.

Table 1

Participants, data sources, and analytical purpose

Participants/source	n	Instrument	Purpose
Eighth-grade students	37	16-item questionnaire	Frequency, perceived usefulness, speaking self-report, and preferred strategies
Eighth-grade students	37	Diagnostic speaking test	Classification into Pre-A1, developing A1, or consolidated A1
English classes	Observed sessions	Two structured checklists	Physical resources and pedagogical processes
English teachers	2	Structured consultation	Current use, perceived effectiveness, and speaking difficulties

Note. The student cohort was studied through a census. Teacher information is contextual because the number of respondents was two.

Instruments

The student questionnaire contained 16 closed-ended items. Items 1-8 addressed exposure to or perceptions of interactive playful strategies, including general interactive activities, riddles, role plays, group games, team competitions, group work, tongue twisters, and spelling contests. Items 9-15 explored speaking indicators such as pauses, clarity, organization, fluency, pronunciation, sentence structure, and vocabulary. A four-point Likert-type scale was used to collect responses and 4 = always, 3 = almost usually, 2 = occasionally, and 1 = never because students were asked to choose the approach they thought would be best for speaking development in item 16.

Three global levels of performance were identified by the diagnostic speaking test and students who could respond with entire phrases, appropriate basic vocabulary, generally clear pronunciation, and basic fluency were described in Consolidated A1. Short or insufficient answers that were still comprehensible but needed repetition or visual assistance were reported in Developing A1. Pre-A1 reported isolated words, frequent blending of Spanish and English, imprecise pronunciation, poor comprehension and continuous assistance. Although the descriptors were locally customized and should not be regarded as an official standardized CEFR

certification, they were understood in relation to early CEFR proficiency (Council of Europe, 2020).

There were two checklists utilized for observations and lesson connection, communication of objectives, motivation, active participation, technology use, formative assessment, playful activities, collaborative work, speaking practice and lesson closure were all covered in the first, while the second focused on the physical environment and resource availability. Fifteen scaled statements and one preference item were included in the teacher consultation. It examined how gamification, role-playing, cooperative communication, team competitions, icebreakers, tongue twisters, spelling exercises and speaking cues were viewed.

Validity, reliability, and data quality

Expert judgment was used to find content and response-process evidence and item correspondence, representativeness, and wording were examined by three postgraduate experts in applied linguistics, English education, and language instruction. Their observations led to revisions in several questions, especially those that used abstract terminology or duplicated speaking indicators. This process is consistent with the view that validity concerns the defensibility of interpretations made from survey scores in a specific context rather than a permanent property of an instrument (Hill et al., 2022).

The thesis reports that a pilot application involved 73% of the population and that Cronbach's alpha was selected to examine internal consistency. However, the numerical coefficient and item-level pilot database were not included in the manuscript supplied for this article. In keeping with transparent reporting, no alpha value is invented or inferred here. Internal consistency should be recalculated and reported from the final analytic dataset before journal submission, because alpha must be interpreted in relation to scale dimensionality and item content (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; Zakariya, 2022).

Procedure and analysis

The thirty-seven students got the questionnaire in person. Everything was done according to the rules, for informed consent and the school said it was okay. This way of doing things worked well because the students did not usually use their mobile devices at school and the internet connection was not very good. The Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador said this in 2025. Then the two teachers finished talking to the students using a task to see how well they could speak and they used checklists to observe the students. The teachers used the speaking task and the observation checklists to finish the consultation with the thirty seven students.

For every option on the questionnaire, percentages and frequencies were computed. Almost always and always were combined for interpretive summaries. This combined % was deemed favorable in items that represented a desirable speaking outcome. The same combined % indicated a problem signal in the pauses item and level and percentage summaries of the

diagnostic test results were provided. Student outcomes were triangulated with teacher comments and observations.

The thesis reports a Pearson product-moment correlation of $r = .88$ between a composite score for playful strategies and a composite speaking score. The coefficient was retained as a reported result, but raw paired scores, confidence intervals, and the exact item-composition rules were not available for independent verification. It is therefore interpreted cautiously as a strong association within this cohort, not as proof that playful strategies caused higher speaking performance.

Ethical considerations

It was entirely voluntary to participate and students were given age-appropriate information regarding the objective and procedures, and parents or legal guardians were sought for their informed consent. Anonymity safe data processing, nondiscrimination and the separation of the researcher's teaching function from participation decisions were all outlined in the research strategy. Participation was not to have an impact on students' grades or how they were treated in class. These safeguards were particularly important because the participants were minors and the researcher also worked within the educational setting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Use and perceived usefulness of interactive playful strategies

The first group of items revealed an uneven instructional profile. General interactive activities received 70.27% favorable responses, and group work was the most established practice, with 91.89% of students indicating that it occurred always or almost always. Students also valued group games: 62.16% believed that they facilitated oral production. In contrast, specific speaking-oriented techniques were rarely used. Only 8.11% reported frequent role play, 18.92% frequent riddles, 13.51% frequent tongue twisters, and 21.62% frequent spelling contests. Team competitions occupied an intermediate position: 45.95% considered them useful, while 54.05% selected sometimes or never.

Table 2

Student reports on interactive playful strategies (n = 37)

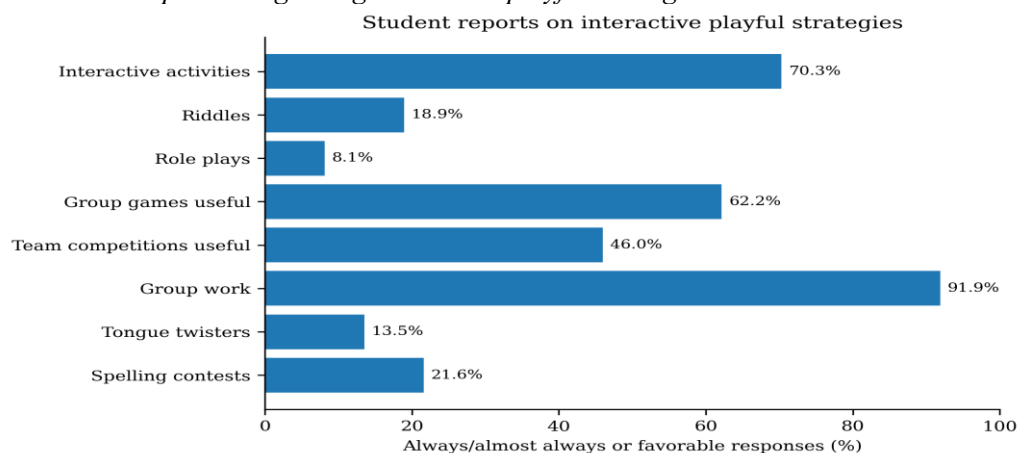
Item/strategy	Type of item	Always or almost always (%)	Sometimes or never (%)	Main interpretation
Interactive activities	Reported exposure	70.27	29.73	Generally present
Riddles	Reported exposure	18.92	81.08	Infrequent
Role plays	Reported exposure	8.11	91.89	Very infrequent
Group games	Perceived usefulness	62.16	37.84	Mostly valued
Team competitions	Perceived usefulness	45.95	54.05	Mixed appraisal

Group work	Reported exposure	91.89	8.11	Strongest routine
Tongue twisters	Reported exposure	13.51	86.49	Very infrequent
Spelling contests	Reported exposure	21.62	78.38	Infrequent

Note. Percentages combine the response options always and almost always. Items 4 and 5 measure perceived usefulness rather than direct classroom frequency.

Figure 1

Favorable responses regarding interactive playful strategies



Note. The figure combines always and almost always responses. Values for group games and team competitions reflect perceived usefulness; the remaining values reflect reported exposure.

It is crucial from a pedagogical standpoint to contrast regular group work with infrequent role acting. Meaningful speech engagement is not always produced when students are grouped together and students can work on written assignments in groups, split up their responses, or rely on a single, self-assured speaker. When each participant has information a role, or a decision that necessitates speaking, communicative value arises. This distinction helps explain why kids may report doing a lot of group work but yet exhibiting hesitancy and poor fluency.

The lack of exposure to particular activities may also indicate that fun tactics were not arranged in a logical sequence and according to research on gamification, learning is not always improved by standalone game elements unless they are in line with goals, feedback and learner needs (Bai et al., 2020; Sailer & Homner, 2020) moreover the goal in this situation is to transform current collaboration routines into repeating speaking cycles—preparation, initial performance, feedback, and improved repetition—rather than to maximize the number of games.

Student-reported speaking performance

The speaking indicators showed that oral production remained fragile. Seventy-point-two-seven percent of students indicated that they always or almost always made many pauses when speaking English. Only 27.03% reported consistent fluency, and 35.14% reported accurate pronunciation. Clear expression, organized messages, and appropriate vocabulary each reached 37.84%. Sentence structure was the strongest positive indicator, although only 51.35% reported

consistent accuracy. These results suggest that students possessed partial grammatical knowledge but had difficulty accessing and coordinating it during real-time communication.

Table 3

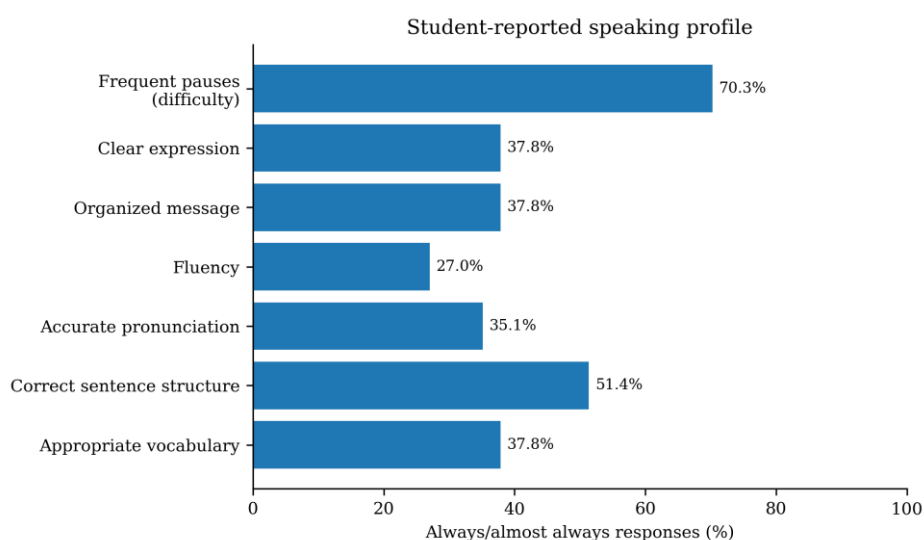
Student-reported speaking indicators (n = 37)

Speaking indicator	Always or almost always (%)	Sometimes or never (%)	Interpretation
Frequent pauses	70.27	29.73	High difficulty signal
Clear expression	37.84	62.16	Needs strengthening
Organized message	37.84	62.16	Needs strengthening
Fluency	27.03	72.97	Most limited positive indicator
Accurate pronunciation	35.14	64.86	Needs strengthening
Correct sentence structure	51.35	48.65	Relatively stronger
Appropriate vocabulary	37.84	62.16	Needs strengthening

Note. For frequent pauses, a high percentage represents greater difficulty. For the remaining indicators, a high percentage represents a favorable self-report.

Figure 2

Always or almost always responses for speaking indicators



Note. Frequent pauses indicate difficulties communicating, which is why the first bar is a negative indicator. The other bars show the intended speaking results.

The pattern aligns with the cognitive requirements of speaking at a beginning level and even though they can recognize a phrase pattern when they see it, students may find it difficult to recall terminology and enunciate sounds fast enough to keep the floor therefore, it is important to distinguish between first language presentation and fluency practice. Learners need multiple opportunities to express similar meanings under gradually reduced support, rather than a single performance that is immediately graded for accuracy (Newton & Nation, 2020).

The stronger result for sentence structure should not be interpreted as evidence of fully developed grammatical competence. Approximately half of the group still selected sometimes or never, and the diagnostic descriptions showed short or incomplete responses among many students. Nevertheless, this relative strength offers an entry point: familiar sentence frames can

support role plays and information-gap tasks while students focus on clarity, rhythm, and vocabulary expansion.

Diagnostic speaking levels

The performance-based diagnostic test confirmed the self-report pattern. Twenty students (54.05%) were classified at developing A1, 11 (29.73%) at Pre-A1, and six (16.22%) at consolidated A1. Thus, 31 of 37 students (83.78%) had not yet reached the locally defined consolidated A1 profile. The largest group could communicate with limited but understandable language, yet still required repetition, visual support, or additional planning time.

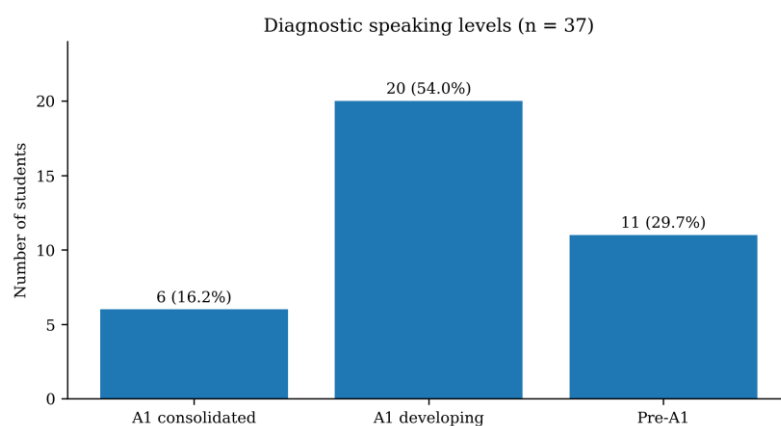
Table 4
Diagnostic speaking levels

Level	Performance descriptor	Students	Percentage
A1 consolidated	Complete basic sentences, appropriate vocabulary, generally clear pronunciation, basic fluency, and confident participation	6	16.22
A1 developing	Short or incomplete sentences, limited but understandable vocabulary, minor pronunciation/fluency errors, and some support required	20	54.05
Pre-A1	Isolated words or Spanish-English mixing, unclear pronunciation, comprehension difficulty, and constant support required	11	29.73
Total		37	100.00

Note. The categories were locally adapted for the diagnostic instrument and should not be interpreted as an official CEFR certification.

Figure 3

Distribution of diagnostic speaking levels



Note. Most students were located at developing A1, indicating an emerging capacity to communicate that still depended on support.

The convergence between the questionnaire and diagnostic test strengthens the practical interpretation. Students who reported frequent pauses and limited fluency were also predominantly located in developing A1 or Pre-A1. This convergence does not establish that the questionnaire is a substitute for performance assessment; rather, it shows that the two data sources pointed to the same priority: increasing sustained, comprehensible oral production.

Student preferences, teacher perspectives, and classroom conditions

Students clearly preferred interaction-based strategies. Role play was selected by 19 students (51.35%), and group competitions by 11 (29.73%). Together, these options accounted for 81.08% of preferences. Riddles were selected by five students (13.51%) and tongue twisters by two (5.41%). Both teachers also identified role play as the most effective option and gave their highest ratings to group interaction and collaborative play. At the same time, both teachers rated student hesitation and pauses at the maximum level, corroborating the student data.

Table 5
Preferred strategies and teacher priorities

Strategy	Student frequency	Student percentage	Teacher evidence
Role play	19	51.35	Selected by both teachers as most effective
Group competitions	11	29.73	Viewed as motivating; collaborative interaction rated highly
Riddles	5	13.51	Lower priority
Tongue twisters	2	5.41	Lowest teacher rating
Total	37	100.00	

Note. Teacher evidence is descriptive because only two English teachers participated.

The physical environment observation showed a clean, safe, and adequately ventilated school, but visible updated resources, specialized laboratories, technology-equipped classrooms, common areas, student support materials, and a motivating learning climate were observed only sometimes. This means that pedagogical innovation must be feasible with the resources already available. Designs that presume one device per student are less realistic than those that use printed role cards, graphic sequences, locally relevant scenarios, reusable vocabulary strips, classroom items and teacher-controlled audiovisual resources.

The checklist for teaching methods showed the result and the ten important things were only seen sometimes. These things like goals, ways to motivate students keeping students involved using technology checking progress, fun activities learning in groups speaking practice and wrapping up the class were not always used so the important thing is to be consistent. Having a lot of ideas that are not used often may not be as good as using a few good ideas every week. Teaching methods, like these need to be used to be effective. The teaching methods checklist is important because it helps teachers see what they are doing well and what they need to work on. Consistency is key when it comes to teaching methods.

Given that the actual exposure to role play was only 8.11% the preference for role play is particularly significant. Pupils were requesting an activity that they didn't often engage in moreover this gap is a practical opportunity for educators to transform the current group work culture into brief controlled speaking exercises. Role play should begin with linguistic scaffolds and rehearsal, then gradually allow more choice. The positive findings reported by Krebt (2017)

and the local evidence synthesized by Paredes Reascos et al. (2024) support this direction, while also reminding educators that improvement depends on repeated practice and feedback.

Reported association and methodological interpretation

The thesis reports a Pearson correlation of $r = .88$ between composite playful-strategy and speaking scores, interpreted as a very strong positive relationship. Practically the students with higher scores on strategy in the cohort usually had higher scores in speaking and this result confirms the validity of interactive practice as a pedagogical hypothesis and conforms to the descriptive pattern.

However, the coefficient should not be used as proof that using playful tactics greatly enhanced speaking. First common-method variance may inflate connections because both composites were mostly produced from the same self-report instrument. Second, the study was cross-sectional and did not compare pre-intervention and post-intervention performance. Third, raw paired data, p values, confidence intervals, and final reliability estimates were not available in the thesis file used for this article. The scientifically defensible conclusion is therefore that the study found a strong reported association and a clear contextual need for intervention, not a demonstrated causal effect.

Pedagogical implications and scientific contribution

The findings support a context-sensitive sequence for future implementation. A brief model and vocabulary bank may be used at the beginning of a lesson, followed by paired practice, role-based interaction, peer or instructor feedback, and a second try moreover pronunciation can be addressed with brief, concentrated practice incorporated into communicative tasks, and fluency can be increased by repeated speaking on the same subject. Intelligibility, cooperation, involvement, and message completion should be rewarded in group competitions rather than merely speed.

The scientific contribution of the work is the triangulated diagnosis of a rural Ecuadorian environment. This points to a particular mismatch: oral performance remains fragile formal speaking games are infrequent, and collaborative grouping is widespread. This distinction refines the standard advice to use 'interactive strategies' it shows that interaction needs to be designed so that each learner produces words, receives feedback and practices the activity again moreover, the study provides a benchmark for assessing future action-research or quasi-experimental interventions.

Because it can expand access to communicative practice through low-cost participatory ways that don't require personal gadgets this suggested strategy is consistent with inclusive and high-quality education. UNESCO (2020) emphasizes the significance of educator capacity building and contextualized educational action. In this case, task design, classroom management for simultaneous speaking, formative assessment, and adaptation for Pre-A1 and emerging A1 students should be the main areas of expert assistance.

Limitations

There are some limitations in the interpretation of the results and the results are context specific since the study only included one school and a small census. The instructor component only had two participants. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the last part was not available and a large part of the student evidence was self-reported. The diagnostic rubric was locally developed and not standardized and the observation record did not provide enough information about the number and duration of sessions. Finally, the correlation could not be independently reproduced from raw data. These limitations do not invalidate the diagnostic value of the study, but they restrict generalization and causal interpretation.

CONCLUSIONS

The study established that interactive practice existed at Tufiño High School, but it was concentrated in general group work rather than in systematic speaking-oriented playful strategies. Group work was reported by 91.89% of students as frequent, whereas role play, riddles, tongue twisters, and spelling contests were used regularly by fewer than one quarter of the cohort. The findings therefore do not indicate an absence of collaboration; they indicate that collaboration was not consistently transformed into purposeful oral production.

Students' speaking development required targeted support. Frequent pauses affected 70.27% of the cohort, and favorable self-reports for fluency, pronunciation, clarity, organization, and vocabulary remained low. The diagnostic test reinforced this conclusion: 54.05% were at developing A1 and 29.73% at Pre-A1, while only 16.22% met the locally defined consolidated A1 profile. The group possessed an emerging base, but most students still needed scaffolding, repetition, visual support, and more time to formulate messages.

Role play and group competitions offer the strongest starting point because they were preferred by 81.08% of students, and both teachers selected role play as the most effective strategy. These activities should not be introduced as occasional entertainment. They ought to be a part of a planned sequence that incorporates feedback, repeated performance, equal participation, communicative purpose and language preparation. Even in a situation with limited resources, this shift can be made possible by existing group-work processes.

Although the non-experimental design does not show a causal impact, the reported Pearson coefficient ($r = .88$) indicates a strong correlation between speaking scores and playful-strategy scores. Future research should use a transparent analytical database compare performance before and after the intervention, report full reliability evidence and apply the suggested guide over a predetermined time period. Stronger proof of change would come from a comparison group or a meticulously recorded classroom action-research cycle.

Overall, the study provides a useful diagnostic baseline and a useful direction for instructional improvement. The principal proposal is a long-term, low cost, context-sensitive

program of speaking activities which emphasize role-playing, group problem-solving and organized competitions. Its success should be evaluated through performance rubrics that capture fluency, intelligibility, vocabulary, grammatical control, and the ability to maintain interaction.

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